

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An automatically activated parking brake system for a motor vehicle startable without a mechanical key, the system comprising:

an electronic control unit for automatically activating the parking brake in dependence on at least one specified operating parameter of the motor vehicle; and

means for arbitrarily preventing the electronic control unit from automatically activating the parking brake, said means being operatively coupled with the electronic control unit.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said means for arbitrarily preventing the automatic activation of the parking brake comprises a key button in the form of an OFF switch coupled with said electronic control unit, said key button being directly manually actuatable via the driver to arbitrarily prevent the automatic activation of the parking brake by the electronic control unit.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the motor vehicle includes an electronic authorization verification device with a wireless code transmission, said means for arbitrarily preventing the automatic activation of the parking brake making use of the electronic authorization verification

device such that the automatic activation of the parking brake is arbitrarily prevented by inserting the authorization verification device in a holding shaft.

4. The system according to claim 2, wherein the motor vehicle includes an electronic authorization verification device with a wireless code transmission, said means for arbitrarily preventing the automatic activation of the parking brake making use of the electronic authorization verification device such that the automatic activation of the parking brake is arbitrarily prevented by inserting the authorization verification device in a holding shaft.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein said at least one operating parameter is a shutting-off of an internal combustion engine of the motor vehicle.

6. The system according to claim 2, wherein said at least one operating parameter is a shutting-off of an internal combustion engine of the motor vehicle.

7. The system according to claim 3, wherein said at least one operating parameter is a shutting-off of an internal combustion engine of the motor vehicle.

8. A method of operating an automatically activated parking brake system of a motor vehicle startable without a mechanical key, the method comprising the acts of:

detecting at least one specified operating parameter of the motor vehicle;

automatically activating a parking brake of the motor vehicle in dependence on the detected specified operating parameter; and

triggering an arbitrary prevention of the automatic activation of the parking brake upon a signal from a user of the motor vehicle.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said triggering act occurs by a direct manual actuation of a key button switch signaling the arbitrary prevention of the automatic activation of the parking brake.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the act of triggering is carried out by inserting an authorization verification device having a wireless code transmission in a holding shaft in the vehicle, said insertion signaling the arbitrary prevention of the automatic activation of the parking brake.